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SUBJECT: USAID/DART ASSESSMENT OF EARTHQUAKE-AFFECTED TOWNS IN
HAITI'S SOUTHERN PENINSULA - HUMANITARIAN UPDATE #4

REF: PORT A 0054; PORT A 0058; PORT A 0060

¶1. (U) Summary. On January 25 and 26, assessment teams from USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) visited earthquake-affected cities and towns along Haiti's southern peninsula. The team confirmed that Leogane sustained heavy earthquake damage, with the majority of buildings rendered unusable. Assessments conducted in two of Leogane's camps indicated that sanitation and hygiene remain major concerns, while water needs appeared to be met. Families have constructed shelters with materials from damaged buildings and are preparing their own food in makeshift kitchen areas. Coordination among organizations working in Leogane and surrounding areas remains poor, necessitating the establishment of a local U.N. cluster system. End summary.

DAMAGE ALONG HAITI'S SOUTHERN PENINSULA

¶2. (U) On January 25 and 26, USAID/DART staff conducted assessments in earthquake-affected Leogane, Grand Goave, and Petit Goave towns in West Department. The assessments substantiated recent U.N. estimates indicating that the earthquake heavily damaged or destroyed more than 80 percent of Leogane, while less than 20 percent of buildings in neighboring Grand Goave and Petit Goave were destroyed. With the extent of the damage and displacement in the Leogane area, substantial relief and recovery efforts will be required.

SETTLEMENTS IN LEOGANE

¶3. (U) According to the Government of Haiti and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), there are between 15 and 20 spontaneous settlements in Leogane - the city most affected by the January 12 earthquake and subsequent aftershocks. To determine humanitarian needs and gaps in assistance in Leogane, the USAID/DART conducted multiple assessments in two settlements,

including the city's largest camp at the soccer stadium, which currently houses 4,000 to 5,000 people during the day and up to 9,000 people at night.

SHELTERS, FOOD, AND CAMP LIFE

¶4. (U) The majority of families at the stadium had constructed shelters with materials salvaged from damaged houses, primarily sheets of corrugated metal, boards, and bed linens. Camp inhabitants indicated that families share living quarters, reporting that an average of three families slept in a 15 foot by 20 foot space. Although a number of manufactured tents were pitched throughout the camp, self-constructed structures comprised the vast majority of shelters. A second USAID/DART assessment team noted that some camp residents have also benefited from a limited distribution of high-quality reinforced plastic sheeting of unknown origin.

¶5. (U) Both USAID/DART assessment teams observed ongoing cooking in settlements visited, noting that many families stored cooking materials in their tents - primarily pots used over an open flame. In addition, multiple families were observed eating self-prepared rice, accompanied by beans and other items. The teams also noted significant commercial activity in the camp, including a barber shop, shoe salesmen, and a cell phone charging station.

WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE

¶6. (U) At the Leogane stadium settlement, the Spanish Red Cross has installed a water bladder on the roof of a building that forms the edge of the camp, complete with piping and two six-spigot taps. The team observed no queues forming at the well, indicating that the camp population is not experiencing a water shortage. Spot tests indicated that the water was chlorinated at the recommended level. When asked, camp residents indicated that their water needs had been met with the installation of the water bladder.

¶7. (U) However, the USAID/DART determined that stadium camp lacked adequate sanitation facilities, with only one pre-existing latrine on site. Residents continue to use the grassy area outside the stadium's main playing surface for defecation, as well as for garbage disposal. The solid waste is attracting large number of flies; proliferation of other vectors is likely as well. The USAID/DART assessment team noted several open areas on the perimeter of the stadium suitable for latrine blocks. Due to potential hazards associated with poor sanitation practices and concentrated population, construction of latrines and establishment of a system for garbage disposal remain high priority interventions which should be pursued urgently by the U.N. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Cluster.

¶8. (U) In one of Leogane's smaller camps, located in front of the mayor's office, the USAID/DART observed similar water and sanitation conditions. The displaced population currently collects water from one pre-existing artesian well, where water flow is moderate, but continuous. In addition, households reported receiving water purification tablets and collapsible water

containers in a recent distribution. However, like the larger camp, the USAID/DART observed no latrines at the site. Camp residents indicated that families continued to use latrines in damaged houses, or had resorted to open defecation.

HEALTH SERVICES

¶9. (U) USAID/DART assessment teams spoke with multiple non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Leogane, many of which were providing basic health and medical services. In discussion with NGO and volunteer staff, the USAID/DART discovered that, because NGOs have not participated in the U.N. cluster system, coordination of activities remains poor. In many cases, NGO staff members were unaware of the services offered by organizations in the same area. This became particularly apparent when staff at the stadium health clinic indicated that they did not know where to refer patients that required more advanced medical treatment. (Note: at least four field hospitals are located within a ten-mile radius of Leogane's stadium, including two with surgical capabilities. End note.) The USAID/DART encouraged NGOs to send a representative to local cluster meetings, when scheduled, to better coordinate the medical response in Leogane and establish a pipeline to restock medical supplies.

PETIT GOAVE AND GRAND GOAVE

¶10. (U) Although Petit Goave and Grand Goave experienced some heavy earthquake-related damage, destruction was sporadic - affecting an estimated 15 to 20 percent of both towns. According to a representative from IOM in Petit Goave, many families still sleep outside, fearing an aftershock during the night. The USAID/DART observed that many displaced families had erected shelters beside damaged homes, incorporating the remaining walls or rubble into a structure located on the same property. A limited number of families had erected tents in the middle of the street, while others used locally-made screens woven from palm fronds as walls.

¶11. (U) In Petit Goave, the USAID/DART observed a neighborhood with approximately 15 houses partially visible in the water. According to local residents, the earthquake resulted in a dramatic shift of the shore line, illustrated by now-submerged houses and standing palm trees once located 20 feet or more from the water's edge. At the same site, locals indicated that the ocean floor no longer sloped gradually as it had before, but "dropped off" abruptly after approximately 30 feet. Although it remains unclear exactly how the earthquake altered the ocean floor, the permanent change in the shore line is apparent.

COORDINATION

¶12. (U) The USAID/DART learned that a large number of NGOs are present in and around Leogane, including Samaritan's Purse, Save

the Children, Diakonie, Crisis International, Action Contre la Faim, Heart to Heart, United Methodist Committee on Relief, and Partners in Health. For successful relief and recovery programs, a local cluster system must be established to coordinate NGO and U.N. activities. The USAID/DART understands that the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) plans to promote further development of the cluster system in areas outside Port-au-Prince, particularly along the southern peninsula, and strongly encourages the initiative.

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